**CT Discovery – User Interview Notes – School Certifying Officials**

October 2020

**Interview N – VetsEdSuccess – Legal Team**

**Org provides free legal help to military connected students who’re having trouble with their education benefits: students who’ve been defrauded,**

1. 5-10% of students they work with have of issues with overlapping benefits
2. Military status / Reservist Learn more needs a note about 48 months eligibility requirements
3. Important to show student loan debt (relative to average) with GI Bill benefits
4. Outcomes provide perspectivce on how #’s compare relative to school type, size
5. Want source info for “Historical info” – where does that come from (VA? School?)
6. Concerned that not enough complaints are being shown – that the schools dictated what complaints should be shown
7. Total # of complaints used to be visible (before 3/2020); VA said the historical record would be there but it’s not
8. Increase Transparency: Show complaints in a way students can read them.
9. Increase Transparency: Tuition isn’t always a measure of quality education
10. Increase Transparency: Show when schools are high-risk
11. More info needed for Yellow Ribbon. Display Yes / No makes students think gthey’ll get it.
12. Students tend to focus on tuition and housing but there’s more to the decision.
13. Presenting non-traditional schools warps reality.

**Interview N – VetsEdSuccess – Walter Ochinko, Research Director**

1. Looking for CT to be a public archive with data on student retention, course completion, earnings
2. Mentions half the schools participate in Title IV
3. Interested in details of GI Bill Students – active duty, enlisted, officer.
4. Mostly uses CT dataset (excel link at bottom of page)
5. Mentions identification of schools in crosswalk is difficult.
6. Interested in GI BIll students by school ownership
7. Interested in specifics around Yellow Ribbon program and $$ - how much is VA paying, the school; how many students

**Interview N – VetsEdSuccess – Policy Team**

1. Suggest pulling more data from College Scorecard & College Navigator.
2. “ED’s data is universally respected as accurate. Just use it.”
3. Has people compare schools pre-enrollment
4. Used to have people review outcomes but they’re not longer available
5. MOCs call for data & team uses CT data dashboard (excel) to provide info
6. Feel removing closed schools is bad for students, bad transparency
7. CT is only legitimate source out there for [ complaints by VA-beneficiaries?]
8. This is the only legitimate, reliable place for info. They’re bombarded with marketing
9. Concerned that tool doesn’t display enough complaints, enough data about complaints
10. Suggest a red/yellow/green rating system for school risk
11. Caution flags are inadequate and incomplete. Not applied across all facilities (Univesity of Phoenix, Devry)
12. VA’s data is least reliable – no way to tell how many GI Bill Students graduate from schools
13. Comparison Tool should allow users to compare schools

**Interview N – Melissa, ELR**

1. Uses tool very little as an ELR; Uses WEAMS more often
2. Looks for housing allowance, yellow ribbon info
3. SCOs to use it except to verify (show students) why there’s a difference in payments
4. CT needs a much larger disclaimer that the numbers are estimates, for informational purposes
5. Has trouble with search type-ahead functionality
6. Has trouble getting to CT from benefits.va.gov
7. CT will become directory for SCOs if WEAMS Public is retired – needs contact info (phone & email)
8. Which benefit drop-down needs to include chapter number and benefit nickname
9. Has a different understanding of complaint data
10. Has challenges with getting data corrected in WEAMS – one change took 3 weeks to display; expected it automatically
11. For payments (historical data) be clear about where info comes from, what time period it covers
12. VRE needs additional info around payments / reimbursements

**Interview N – Student Veterans of America, Justin & Justin**

1. There should be a better data exchange between ED tools (Scorecard & Navigator) and the CT
2. ED provides a holistic view of schools (financial aid, debt burden) CT should do a better job of that.
3. CT should have more data – including graduation rates.
4. Interested in generally better data from VA in general
5. Want more detail & transparency on complaints
6. Want caution flags for schools with high numbers of complaints (from feedback tool)
7. Want historical info on complaints – 24 months is too short a window
8. Want side-by-side comparison
9. Want to compare: housing allowance, complaints, flags, Veteran status, Veteran programs, Yellow Ribbon
10. Want ratings
11. Looking for CT to be a public archive with data on student retention, course completion, earnings
12. Want closed schools to stay in CT – important to see why they closed. (Doesn’t have to be searchable, just available)

**Interview N – Nate, Defense Human Resources**

1. VA reporting of $ disbursed for GI Bill and ED reporting of $ is different
2. Interested in what % of GI Bill students are Veterans and which are beneficiaries
3. Mentions other organizations use the tool for data to brief Congress; Congress accepts the #s without fact-checking
4. Mentions app created at West Point with AI to help determine schools of interest: OWEMA
5. “If you’re thinking about a school, think as high as you can go.” Getting you the job / education that maximizes your potential
6. Improve data dictionary & definitions within the tool so it’s clearer what everything is and why it’s important
7. Ability to look for schools by location
8. Ability to look for schools by “competition” (Ivy league, State schools, etc.)
9. Ability to look for schools by programs and degrees.

**Interview N – Don Noble**

**His job is to collect info on schools and verify that students are being treated properly.**

1. Concerned about schools that aggressively advertise to GI Bill beneficiaries
2. Thinks complaints area can be used to localize bad news
3. DISCREPANCIES: ECSS are updating WEAMS file, issues with date discrepancies.
4. CT should show information on ECSS surveys - date of survey, discrepancies.
5. All discrepancies are reported by ELR
6. Interested in bringing more light to ECSS work.
7. 85-15 is important data to display: Shows which programs are over-crowded with Veterans